



## THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF MANSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

I write to inform you that beginning on Monday, December 14, 2009, Durham School Services, our bus company, will provide an additional service called AlertNow. AlertNow is a phone notification system designed to communicate information in the event of a bus delay.

Durham School Services has taken this step because it has been unable to provide consistent daily bus transportation for students both to and from school due to a lack of qualified drivers despite the best efforts of its Manager, Bailey Blanchard, Dispatcher, Kietha Halbach, and a group of dedicated drivers.

In the event of a notable delay, AlertNow will allow the bus company to send an automated phone call to inform you of the bus delay. **Phone calls will only be placed to the specific families with children who are assigned to the impacted bus(es).** For morning delays, the call will be placed to your home phone number, and for afternoon delays the call will be sent to your home and cell phone numbers.

The bus company will use the home and cell phone numbers that you provided to your child's school. If you have a phone number change, please call your child's school office to update school records. AlertNow will update phone numbers once per week. If you do not wish to participate in this service, simply call your school and your number will be removed from this list.

Thank you for your continued patience as Durham attempts to address the staffing issues. We appreciate your support and will continue to work with the bus company to address this issue. While we hope that we will not need to call your family with news of a bus delay, we believe this system will be helpful if this should occur.

On the reverse side of this letter we have listed answers to AlertNow FAQ's that you may find of interest. Please feel free to contact me at 860.429.3350 or email [mboesupt@mansfieldct.org](mailto:mboesupt@mansfieldct.org) with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Frederick A. Baruzzi

## **AlertNow Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** Who will receive phone calls about bus transportation delays?

**A:** Calls will only be placed to the families with children who are assigned to the delayed bus. For morning delays, the call will go to the home phone number of the first and second parent, while in the afternoon it will include the home and cell numbers of the first and second parent.

**Q:** How do I update my home and/or cell phone number?

**A:** Call your child's school. Phone numbers are updated in the AlertNow system once per week.

**Q:** What if I do not want to receive AlertNow phone calls at a specific home or cell phone number?

**A:** Call the Mansfield Public Schools Central Office at 860-429-3350 and provide the specific number(s) to be added to a do-not-call list for our AlertNow system. We encourage you to consider not taking this step as we believe AlertNow is an important communication tool, but we will of course respect your request.

**Q:** Can I receive the phone call on other numbers?

**A:** Morning bus delays will only be sent to the home phone number of the first and second parent and afternoon bus delays will only be sent to the home and cell phone numbers of the first and second parent contact.

**Q:** What if no one answers the phone?

**A:** AlertNow will attempt to leave a message on the answering machine if available. If the number is busy or no machine answers, it will make 4 attempts and will wait three minutes between each attempt.

**Q:** What if I want to listen to the message again during the phone call?

**A:** At any point during the phone call you can press "1" on your phone and it will start the message again from the beginning. You can not listen to the message again once you have hung up the phone.

**Q:** I said "hello" and no message played. Why?

**A:** Errors might occur if the person repeatedly says "hello" or answers in a noisy environment as the system may pause to wait for silence if it is repeatedly interrupted. You can press "1" on your phone to force it to play.

**Q:** Why is my answering machine recording only a portion of the message or no message at all?

**A:** If the answering machine greeting is sporadic or quiet with varied periods of silence, the system might read this as a live person and begin playing the message, even though the machine has yet to start recording. The recommended solution is to re-record your answering machine message clearly and with no extended pauses.

**Q:** Can AlertNow enter a mailbox number or extension number?

**A:** Generally AlertNow is not able to do this.

**Q:** I have a telemarketer screening device. How will that affect the call?

**A:** This will usually result in a failed attempt to place the phone call.

**Q:** I have a phone line that is shared by a fax machine. Can I receive the calls?

**A:** Generally yes, but some fax machines will prevent the call from being successfully placed.

**Q:** Will I have problems receiving the call on my cell phone?

**A:** Generally no, but reception issues can cause errors, such as a delayed start or an incomplete voicemail message. Sprint and Nextel networks often have a message that says "Please hold while we locate the subscriber," which AlertNow mistakenly may think is the proper time to start playing the message.

**Q:** If I have two children on the same school bus, will I receive the phone call twice if their bus is delayed?

**A:** No, the AlertNow system will only call the phone number once.

**Q:** If my child only rides the bus on certain days of the week, will I only receive the phone call on those days? Similarly, if my child is absent, will I not receive the phone call?

**A:** The AlertNow system places the phone call for all children assigned to the school bus and can not differentiate if the child is not on the bus on a given day.